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Some psychological assumptions of Franklin D. Roosevelt

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SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS
OF FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Psychology
University of Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts and Sciences

by
Geraldine Nesvan
June 1960

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the thirty-second president of the United States, has achieved world wide renown during the almost thirty-five years that he held public office in the American political scene. No man, other than Roosevelt, was elected more than twice; no other has served longer than two terms. Now, under the Twenty-second Amendment to the Constitution, none will have the chance to equal his tenure as president.

Roosevelt's political theories, ideas, and actions have been analyzed and investigated from the standpoint of how the United States and the world have been affected, but little appears to have been done to find out what this so powerful man thought about ideas of personality, mind, nature of the crowd, and other psychological assumptions. Much that is written about psychology is not written by psychologists.

This study was undertaken to determine this great democratic leader's psychological assumptions concerning the nature of man as an individual or as a unit of power in group action.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. It was the purpose of this study to determine the psychological assumptions which underlie Franklin Delano Roosevelt's basic concepts about the nature of the individual and of the group.

Importance of the Study. The ideas of Franklin Delano Roosevelt which affected the world have been discussed from the political, economic and historical aspects but no systematic study has been completed concerning his psychological concepts. This is but one of a series of theses concerning the psychological assumptions of important men in the history of the world completed in the psychology department. The first such thesis concerned "Nazism".

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Method of Research. The principal material of this study was obtained from the public statements of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, thirty-second president of the United States. Occasionally when Roosevelt quotes others to clarify a point, these statements are accepted and used as expressions of his own beliefs.

Since this writer did not have access to Roosevelt's private library at Hyde Park, New York, she was forced to seek objective unedited copies of Roosevelt's original statements and speeches.

The majority of the source material used in this study has been published during the time that Roosevelt held public office and the eye of the American public.

The statements used in this study were not chosen at random, but were selected with respect to the relevancy of the specific topic under consideration and to the general subject of the study.

Limits of the Study. It was not the intent of this study to delve

into the moral, ethical or political implications of the statements presented.

Many tomes have been written on these subjects. This writer is interested in the psychological assumptions of Roosevelt as evidenced by what he said. His performance or actions are of secondary importance.

Arrangement of the Remainder of the Study. The discussion is divided into the following major topics: (1) Introduction, (2) The Group, (3) The Individual, (4) Summary.

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE

In this chapter the people of the United States are discussed from the standpoint of Roosevelt's assumptions about their nature. The discussion concerns the social nature of the people.

I. SOCIAL NATURE OF THE PEOPLE

The social nature of a people may be assumed to consist of those characteristics which identify a people as a group. Among these are the following: (1) culture (both material and spiritual), (2) religion, (3) morality, (4) labor, (5) family, (6) classes.

Culture. To Roosevelt, the term culture appears to be synonymous with higher living standards engendered by an economy that will produce creature comforts in abundance. He said: "The Great Teacher said 'I come that ye may have life and that ye may have it more abundantly.' The object of all our striving should be to realize that 'Abundant life.'"¹ With these words written during the first year of the New Deal, Roosevelt expressed his underlying social view.

The people's material culture is that which they made or are making to supply their physical needs. It consists of all those material objects such as food, clothing, shelter and so on that evolve from a people working and living together.

¹Franklin D. Roosevelt, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, (New York: Random House, 1938) III, 96.

But Roosevelt did not have a merely materialistic view of culture. To Roosevelt, the material culture and the development of a spiritual culture were interdependent. He believed that many things were inter-related in the development of a complete culture.

The esthetic side of Franklin D. Roosevelt is revealed in his enthusiasm for art. To him, art was an expression of the free man and as such was a dynamic part of our culture. He pioneered the traveling art exhibits and encouraged the growth of native American art. He declared, "We are furthering democracy itself in encouraging the creation and enjoyment of beautiful things."²

His taste in literature was considered rather mundane, but he was an avid collector of books. His interests were mainly in naval records and local history. However, he encouraged the American people to read and recognized the influence and force of the written word. "Inequality may linger in the world of material things, but great music, great literature, great art, and the wonders of science are, and should be, open to all."³

Roosevelt enjoyed the out doors and considered it a living art show, a panorama to be enjoyed by the American family and one that would instill a love of country in the populace.

²Thomas H. Greer, What Roosevelt Thought, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1958) p. 17.

³Franklin D. Roosevelt, Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt (New York: Macmillan, 1938) p. 84.

There is no evidence to indicate that Roosevelt was overly fond of music. But, notwithstanding, many musicians during the depression were supported by the WPA (Works Progress Administration).

Religion. Religion to Roosevelt was perhaps the single most important aspect of life. It tended to enhance all other beliefs. He established the precedent of attending special services at St. John's Church with members of his family and Cabinet before his first inauguration. He did this on successive inaugurations, as well as many special occasions, and each time asked for divine guidance for the task ahead. "As I stand here today, having taken the solemn oath of office in the presence of my fellow countrymen and in the presence of God--I know that it is America's purpose that we shall not fail."⁴

Roosevelt was convinced that: "With every passing year I become more confident that humanity is moving forward to the practical application of the teachings of Christianity as they affect the individual lives of men and women everywhere."⁵

According to Mrs. Roosevelt, his simple, childlike, naive, unquestioning practical faith was to him both an anchor and a guide. "I think he felt," she said, "that in great crises he was guided by a strength and wisdom higher than his own, for his religious faith, though simple, was unwavering and direct."⁶

⁴ Donald Day, Franklin D. Roosevelt's Own Story, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1957) p. 431.

⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, (New York: Random House, 1938) II, 379.

⁶ Willard Range, Franklin D. Roosevelt's World Order (University of Georgia Press, 1959) p. 129.

Roosevelt was known for his ability to be facetious or irreverent about anything that occurred but he held all religion to be highly personal and sacred matter. All who had contact with him were very deeply impressed with his religious sincerity and the utter simplicity of his religious views. He asserted that:

No greater thing could come to our land today than a revival of the spirit of religion--a revival that would sweep through the homes of the Nation and stir the hearts of men and women of all faiths to a reassertion of their beliefs in God and their dedication to His will for themselves and their worlds.⁷

He accepted the Christian truths and was not concerned with theological subtleties and formality. He did not pursue theological abstraction nor engage in doctrinal arguments.

Roosevelt regarded the Bible with great reverence, thought of the Scriptures as incomparable sources of wisdom, and frequently turned to them in his writing and his speaking. He viewed the Bible and religion chiefly in ethical terms. His concern for the common man and his passion for social betterment probably grew from, or were augmented by, his religious convictions and he identified his conception of "social justice" with Christianity itself.

Because of his ethical approach to both religion and government, he saw no real conflict between the Church and State. The higher aims of both coincided, and the two, "While wholly separate in their functioning, can work hand in hand."⁸

⁷Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., V, 86.

⁸Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., X, 192.

Roosevelt had no tolerance for gloomy religions and said that: "The churches today, are beginning to go along with the new scientific growth and are opening the way to a simpler faith, a deeper faith, a happier faith than ever our forefathers had."⁹

He desired the greatest possible freedom of belief. He disliked the idea of a church disciplined by fear such as had been the tradition of many denominations. He often quoted the Virginia Declaration of Rights: "That religion or the duty which we owe our Creator, and the manner of discharging it can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence..."

He was very tolerant of all faiths. Disputes between sects bothered him and he wished that they be stopped. "We who have faith cannot afford to fall out among ourselves. ...For as I see it, the chief religious issue is not between our various beliefs, it is between belief and unbelief."¹⁰

Roosevelt placed intellectual freedom above every other in importance. He had the deepest respect for free inquiry and creativity of expression. Therefore, he regarded them as indispensable to the progress dictated by democracy. He stressed that: "The truth is found when men are free to pursue it. It is this belief in freedom of the mind, written into our fundamental law, and observed in our everyday dealings

⁹Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., X, 191.

¹⁰Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., V, 85.

with the problems of life, that distinguishes us as a nation . . ."¹¹

Roosevelt regretted every tyranny over the mind. He was sure that nations could not isolate themselves from ideas. Ideas, to him, knew no boundaries and to him, the ideology of the Iron Curtain, was futile.

Roosevelt saw an almost perfect correlation between democracy and individual liberty. "A life of freedom and justice are the inalienable rights of every man."¹² From this, we might say, that Roosevelt assumed the doctrine of innate ideas.

Roosevelt spent many years planning his four freedoms which he announced in a Press-Conference in 1940. They are as follows:

- (1) Freedom of information, (2) Freedom of religion and expression,
- (3) Freedom from fear, (4) Freedom from want.

While Roosevelt believed in a divine plan and in the controlling hand of a "beneficent God," he, nevertheless gave importance to man's freedom of will and to individual self determination. Individual Freedom was circumscribed by God's command, but Roosevelt conceived that it was the Lord's purpose to give humanity a large measure of freedom in working out its' own destiny. He deplored the idea that man should sit back and let God and nature "take their course." He believed that humans were

¹¹Ibid., p. 93.

¹²Ibid., p. 94.

¹³Ibid., p. 104.

well endowed to solve their own problems no matter how difficult and that they were morally bound to do so. Despite the many trials and errors that humans would make solving their problems, he was convinced that, with God's help, the answers could be found if only the will to find them were strong enough.. Self help and self control, he believed, were the common denominators of purposeful progress. He denied every form of determinism--economic, geographic, racial or historical. Nations, as well as individuals, were free. He emphasized this idea when Hitler threatened to drag all Europe into the conflict and their leaders felt that they were being driven to destruction.

Divine Purpose, Free Will and Progress. Roosevelt saw a pattern in history. To him, the universe was orderly and planned. This is a deterministic philosophy. But he disagreed with any notion of mechanical determinism. Roosevelt believed that there was an all encompassing divine purpose, according to which human wills cooperated with God in the making of a better world.

These two opposing philosophies, determinism and free will, advocated by Roosevelt, point out the confused thinking on his part or a fine disregard for theoretical subtleties. He believed that every man had his purpose in life, personally construed and defined, and with this purpose, the strength and ability to carry it through. As president, he felt that he, himself, had a particular duty in this divine scheme of things and accepted personally the tasks delineated and defined by the masses. On the brink of his election, Roosevelt told Anne

O'Hare McCormick of the New York Times: "The Presidency is not merely an administrative office. ...It is pre-eminently a place of moral leadership."¹⁴

He proclaimed Sunday, September 8, 1940 as a day of national prayer and he invoked God's mercies many times in time of trouble. He believed that God was directly interested in and functional in the world of men and that God was really responsive to prayer. Roosevelt had a most profound trust in his own judgement after prayer. A good illustration of his deep regard for the guidance of God is this following statement: "In this dedication of a nation, we humbly ask the blessing of God. May he protect each and every one of us. May He guide me in the days to come."¹⁵

Individual freedom was circumscribed by God's command, but Roosevelt conceived that it was the Lord's purpose to give humanity a large measure of freedom in working out his own destiny. He rejected the notion that man should sit back and let God and nature take their course. "Self help and self control are the essence of the American tradition."¹⁶ He thought that human beings were endowed with powers, mental, moral, and physical to solve their own problems, and that they were morally bound to do so. His pragmatic idea was that: "God helps those who help themselves," and, "The future rests on the affirmative action which we take in America."¹⁷

¹⁴Einaudi, The Roosevelt Revolution, (New York: Harcourt-Brace, 1959) p. 107.

¹⁵Franklin D. Roosevelt, Looking Forward, (New York: John Day Co., 1933) p. 269.

¹⁶Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., VII, p. 92.

¹⁷Ibid., 620.

Roosevelt felt that the group forces were a basic entity in our culture. "There is nothing complicated about it and there is nothing particularly new in the principle. It goes back to the basic idea of society and of the Nation itself that people acting in a group can accomplish things which no individual acting alone could even hope to bring about."¹⁸

Morality. Roosevelt's moral code was very simple. He believed in such things as fair play and decency and he assumed that all normal people knew what was fair and decent.

He felt that what was needed among individuals was the right spirit, the proper attitude, the right climate of opinion; then all specific problems could be solved. He carried this idea further and frequently likened individuals to nations and compared their behaviors. He thought that both individuals and nations should behave in a moral way.

Today morality means the same thing as it meant in the days of George Rogers Clark, though we must needs apply it to many many situations that George Rogers Clark never dreamt. In his time among the pioneers, there were jumpers of land claims; there were those who sought to swindle their neighbor, in sparsely settled communities. Today among our teeming millions there are still those who by dishonorable means seek to obtain the possessions of their unwary neighbors. Our modern civilization must constantly protect itself against moral defectives whose objectives are the same, but those methods are more subtle than those of their prototypes of a century and a half ago. We do not change our form of free government when we arm ourselves with new weapons against new devices of crime and cupidity.¹⁹

¹⁸Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., II, 299.

¹⁹Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., V, 220.

The same broad concepts of proper behavior among peoples, between people apply today.

The good neighbor is not just the man who lives next door to you. The objective includes the relationship not between you and him alone but it includes the relationship between your family and his; it extends to all the people who live in the same block; it spreads to all the people who live in the same city and in the same country and in the same State; and most important of all for the future of our Nation, it must and shall extend to all your neighbors, to your fellow citizens in all the states and in all the regions that make up the Nation.²⁰

Roosevelt was aware that man was inherently schizophrenic, capable of both love and hate, competition and cooperation, fear and trust, selfishness and altruism, irrationality and rationality. He believed that the finer things or fineness of man could be brought to the front. He thought that World War II was fought between those who really believed in mankind and those who were not freely willing to admit man's worth.

Roosevelt may have had an unworldly side to him. He accepted as a premise the essential goodness of most human beings. He really did not believe that all men were good but he believed in the decency of the great majority. He usually expressed this as a mathematical ratio of ninety to ten. "If you treat people right they will treat you right -- ninety per cent of the time," he told Frances Perkins. He copied this ratio from Walter Lippman, adopted it as his own, and used it many times. He enlarged upon this theme and believed that ninety per cent of the world really wanted peace, rather than war gains. He thought that perhaps "bad" people were victims of an unhappy environment and he hoped

²⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., 149, V.

through social reform to remove the conditions which bred crime and indigency both nationally and internationally.

Roosevelt firmly believed that man is innately good and the most important aspect of him is his spirit. Roosevelt's great emphasis upon spiritual values is sometimes overlooked because his paramount concern was with materialistic values. His New Deal legislation, which came to be identified with his ideas, dealt with tangibles like food, homes, money, jobs, and trees. But Roosevelt was only accomplishing what needed to be done first. Exigencies demanded prompt and peremptory action. Long range planning must needs then be deferred.

Unlike Karl Marx, Roosevelt rejected as unreal the concept of the "economic man". He believed that man was a harmony of elements, each of which was essential for the support of the others. Man must eat, but "man did not live by bread alone". He found economic reforms necessary for the saving of the spirit; they then became in all reality, moral propositions. He was confident that he faced a great moral as well as an economic problem.

Roosevelt was critical of the acquisitive values that accompanied the race for economic gain. He was unhappy over the many who ignored everything but money. When he spoke of spiritual values, he meant the broadest human aspirations, both natural and divine.

Classes. When considering the structure of society itself, the larger order which includes individuals, families, and kinship groups, Roosevelt did not agree with Aristotle who saw society as a static entity.

In the Greek society, classes were rather rigid. While Roosevelt did admit that classes existed, he denied that they were desirable or an integral part of our culture. "The ... enemy of national unity is class distinction."²¹ He believed that some sort of division was a natural condition considering the diversity of our people and their talents but that this natural division was a fluid rather than a static condition. In Roosevelt's ideal society all men would have equal opportunities, and could go as far as their own abilities took them. He hoped that all classes would understand one another and mingle together to their mutual advantage. His words of caution to a West Point class were as follows:

Esprit de corps, pride of profession, is a delightful and imperative element in the making of a good officer as it is in the making of a good professional or business man, but when it is carried to the point of assuming that only the holder of an Annapolis commission or West Point diploma or the possessor of a college degree, is a valid member of the aristocracy of life, it becomes a hindrance. ...So I ask you to avoid an exclusive relationship. ...Remember to cultivate the friendship of people ... the average run of folks.²²

Family. Roosevelt felt that every child needed parents to nurture him and care for him and teachers to educate and guide him. He felt that each child should be secure in the knowledge that when he grew up that there would be economic security and an opportunity for him to exercise his capabilities. He firmly believed that:

²¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., II, 374.

²² Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., 12.

Nature's deepest instinct is the concern in every parent's heart for the welfare of the children. It is a law of nature which equals even the instinct for the preservation of life itself. Indeed, it is a part of that law, for without preservation of youth, the race itself would perish. And so, the highest duty of any Government is to order public affairs so that opportunities for youth shall be made ever broader and firmer.²³

Aristotle thought of the state as more important than the family, "Since the whole is of necessity prior to the part." Roosevelt regarded the family as the paramount social unit. He felt that mothers and fathers, by the kind of life that they build, are responsible for the future social and public life of the country. Roosevelt felt that the development of boys and girls was bound up with institutions outside the home, the school and church. He urged that all of these be harmonized to give a well rounded growth to young people. He stated that: "May the security and happiness of every boy and girl in our land be our concern, our personal concern, from now on."²⁴

Of the school, Roosevelt had this statement: "The school is the last expenditure upon which America should be willing to economize."²⁵

Roosevelt did not look upon society as a collection of free-wheeling egoists. There was a functional organization, in which the individuals and groups performed specific tasks. He felt that there was no inherent conflict among groups; all were naturally complimentary

²³Roosevelt, op. cit., V.X., p. 470

²⁴Roosevelt, op. cit., V. IX., p.60

²⁵Roosevelt, op. cit., V.X., p. 470

and the goal was cooperation for the general good. When closing the 1933 campaign at Madison Square Garden, he declared that: "Today there appears once more the truth taught two thousand years ago that 'no man lives to himself, and no man dies to himself; but living or dying, we are the Lord's and each others'."

SUMMARY OF THE SOCIAL NATURE OF A PEOPLE

1. Writers, artists, and other creators of culture can develop an outlook in the people by producing an array of material that stimulates and teaches.
2. The collective efforts of the people are essential for building a good society.
3. There needs to be a concentration of productive energies on many common goals.
4. The spiritual aspects of the people offer a means of enabling them to control their own destiny and showing them that they are capable of solving their own problems.
5. Intellectual freedom is above every other in importance, Roosevelt's Four Freedoms: (1) Freedom of information, (2) Freedom of religion, (3) Freedom from fear, and (4) Freedom from want.
6. Morality is not relative.
7. Roosevelt's two conflicting ideologies are determinism and self will.

8. Roosevelt's moral code was simple--fair play and decency.

He believed in the ultimate good in everyone.

10. The labor of the people is for the benefit of themselves as individuals but keeping in mind the fact that the individual functions only in the world of society.

11. As a material, spiritual creature, man in society depends upon his environment for his existence. He can modify his environment and advance his development through his own labor.

12. Man is a mode of production and all his attributes such as knowledge, skills and abilities are also modes of production.

13. Man can increase his productive value to himself through education.

14. All labor is honorable that is productive.

15. He believed in the family as the basic sociological group contrary to Aristotle wherein the state was of paramount importance.

CHAPTER III

THE INDIVIDUAL

This chapter will deal with Roosevelt's assumptions concerning the individual. The discussion will center around the following characteristics of human nature: (1) Needs, (2) Motivation, (3) Emotion, (4) Learning, (5) Thinking, (6) Personality, and (7) Nature, Nurture and abilities.

Needs of the Individual. Roosevelt realized the necessity for the satisfaction of the physiological needs of man and ranked them first in importance. He desired that all man should achieve the comforts necessary for survival. As he explained in his State of the Union Message of 1944:

We have come to a clear realization of the fact that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. 'Necessitous men are not free men'. People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made.

He believed that a man sufficiently endowed with these creature comforts should be a happy, successful man, motivated by the desire to develop and use his fullest potentialities. He regarded the problem as:

...a moral as well as an economic question that we face... We want the opportunity to live in comfort, reasonable comfort, out of which we may build spiritual values.¹

¹Franklin D. Roosevelt, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1938) V. I, p.32.

Roosevelt felt that the satisfaction of physiological needs was basic and necessary in order that man could develop his psychological nature. He felt that the safety or security need was one of the most fundamental.

Roosevelt realized that conformity to the social norms of the group enhanced the security or safety of the individual. If the individual met the norms set up by the group he would be relatively secure and therefore much happier. He emphasized that:

We know that individual liberty and individual happiness mean nothing unless both are ordered in the sense that one's meat is another man's poison ... We know that liberty to do anything which deprives others of elemental rights is outside the protection of any compact.²

Without this basic security drive, Roosevelt felt that there could be no ambition in man to fulfil his mission as a citizen or to achieve as an individual.

Although Roosevelt favored various measures to reduce economic disparities, he was opposed to a system of "handouts". He wanted to improve opportunities for the poor, but through the method of self help, work, and productivity. His intense belief in the value of work explains why he fought against the dole as a means of relief during the Depression. A dole would have been easier to administer and would have appealed to more taxpayers. He stated:

²Ibid., p. 33.

We are dealing with properly self-respecting Americans to whom a mere dole outrages every instinct of individual independence. Most Americans want to give something for what they get. That something, which is in this case is honest work is the saving barrier between them and moral disintegration.³

It is recognized that if a man's physiological needs are not met, he will die. Human life demands that basic human needs be fulfilled. Roosevelt's preoccupation with the problem of adequate food for the masses was probably due to the assumption that a well-fed people are more amenable to direction and thus become a happy and productive people. But, together with this, he believed that the needs of the spirit must be assuaged.

In summary, Roosevelt believed that a major concern of the individual was the satisfaction of his physiological needs. In seeking to satisfy his physiological needs, man interacts with his environment in the process of labor and production. This results in his development and advance.

Safety Needs. Roosevelt believed that the need for safety or security could be said to underlie all activities which maintain the life process and which protect the organism against threats. Thus, physiological needs and drives, any activity intended to protect the organism, and conformity to social norms of the group (thereby being favorably received by others and thus reducing anxiety) may

³ Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., IV, p. 474.

be treated as manifestations of the safety or security need.

As a candidate for president, he told the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco that:

Every man has a right to life; and this means that he has also a right to make a comfortable living. He may be sloth or crime, fail to exercise the right; but it may not be denied him.

It may be said that, to Roosevelt, most safety or security needs had an economic basis. He felt that if he could help man to achieve economic security, to satisfy his physiological needs, then the higher psychological needs could be met. He felt a great obligation to those groups that he thought incapable of satisfying their basic security needs without help. For this reason:

We are concerned about the children of the unemployed.

We are concerned about other children who are without adequate shelter or food or clothing because of the poverty of their parents.

We are concerned about the children of migratory families who have no settled place of abode or normal community relationships.

We are concerned about the children of minority groups in our population who, confronted with discrimination and prejudice, must find it difficult to believe in the just ordering of life or the ability of the adults in their world to deal with life's problems.

We are concerned about the children living beyond the reach of medical service or lacking medical service because their parents cannot afford to pay for it.

We are concerned about the children who are not in school or who attend schools poorly equipped to meet their needs.

We are concerned about the children who are outside the

reach of religious influences, and are denied help in attaining faith in an ordered universe and in the fatherhood of God.

We are concerned about the future of our democracy when children cannot make the assumptions that mean security and happiness.⁴

Roosevelt also desired that the widow and orphan as well as the aged be given help in achieving their economic security. This eventually led to the Social Security Acts.

Love Needs. Roosevelt's main concept of love was activated or based on the idea of spiritual striving. While Governor of New York, he made a commencement address at Fordham University and at that time expressed his view. Discounting the importance of material accomplishment and limiting the role of human laws, he stated that the supreme law was the divine command: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

In his consideration of the hierarchy of needs, Roosevelt placed high the love of the family. Indeed, one of his main concerns was to enable every man to be placed in the economic position that would allow him to establish and support a family, to be able to afford a romantic love. He felt that this loving care of a family allowed the individual to achieve his highest destiny. To him a loving parent guided the development of his child from infancy.

⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., VIII, p. 244

He felt that the happy child should:

...live in a home of warmth, food and affection. He needs parents to provide him with guidance and education. When he grows up there must be a job for him so that he will be able to establish a home of his own.⁵

Self-Actualization Needs. To Roosevelt, the happiness of an individual was determined by the way in which the individual regarded himself. He thought that happiness and success:

...lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort. The joy and moral stimulation of work must no longer be forgotten in the mad chase of evanescent profits. ...our true destiny is not to be ministered unto but to minister to ourselves and to our fellow men.⁶

The need for self-actualization may be regarded as the individual's need to perform a useful task in accordance with his abilities or desires. It is the need for personal achievement--which in turn engenders a feeling of personal worth, highly essential in personality development.

Since both self-esteem and self-actualization mirror the individuals concern about himself in relation to his environment, both are component parts in an adequate interpretation of personality. When considering dignity and rights, Roosevelt had the following to say: "Religion, by teaching man his relationship to God, gives the individual a sense of his own dignity and teaches him to respect himself by respecting other."⁷

⁵Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., VIII, p.243

⁶Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., II, p. 12

⁷Franklin D. Roosevelt, op. cit., VIII, p. 1

"Democracy, the practice of self-government, is a covenant among free men to respect the rights and liberties of their fellows."⁸

He believed that all ages, classes and groups of people should realize their desires as much as possible and enjoy life to the fullest extent. When asked, "Why should I keep on living?" Roosevelt had this to say:

We are coming to the realization that it is a great privilege to be alive, no matter what the number of years we covered. As somebody has said, it is grand no matter how old you get, to want to keep on living because there is still so much to be done. That is the spirit of you youngsters; it is the spirit of us in middle life; and it is the spirit, increasingly, of the older people in our Nation.⁹

Motivation. Motivation to Roosevelt was the inner drive or force which enabled the individual to accomplish his objectives. Roosevelt spent much effort in attempting to stimulate this inner force of man to greater heights. His public appeals and morale building efforts were attempts to make the individual realize his potentialities. Roosevelt believed that the desire to serve gave motive and value to life. He admired the man who was motivated to action:

It is not the critic who counts...The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiently; who errs...who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions...who at best knows high achievement or if he fails,...fails while daring greatly.¹⁰

⁸Ibid.

⁹Roosevelt, op. cit., VIII, p. 180

¹⁰Roosevelt, op cit., V, p. 156

Roosevelt believed that motivational behavior could be stimulated by outside forces. The thirteen volumes of his radio speeches, lectures and letters attest to this fact.

He felt that if the individual was able to satisfy his primary needs and drives then he could be motivated to go on and become interested in further accomplishments. Roosevelt felt that a knowledge of progress enabled the individual to achieve higher goals.

He advocated the necessity for parents and teachers to motivate children so that they might do well in school. He believed that the American people needed to be reminded that they had an obligation to protect their country. He regarded labor as needed to be motivated so that production would soar during the war years.

Contemporary psychologists differ in their explanations of motivation. One view regards motives as being reducible to the limited number of basic interests shared by all men, and presumably innate. These are generally described in terms of their prepotency. "Each lower order must be satisfied before the individual can proceed to the next need in the hierarchy."¹¹

Another view contends that secondary motives arise out of behavior that originally led towards satisfaction of the primary motives. Allport's functional autonomy concept exemplifies this view. The essential feature of Allport's concept is that while new motives may grow out of old ones the new become functionally independent of the old. Motives are contemporary: "Whatever drives," said Allport, "drives now."

¹¹Harry Helson, Theoretical Foundations of Psychology, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949) p. 221.

Emotion. Roosevelt felt that emotions were a part of our life, an inseparable part. He believed that they guided and controlled much of man's behavior. He felt also that emotions needed to be controlled. As he stated, explaining the emotions of the Nation as a whole: "We are not a warlike people. We have never sought glory as a Nation of warriors. We are not interested in aggression. We are not interested... in looting."¹² He called upon the emotions of the American people in his radio Fireside Chats. He used the feelings, emotions that he could induce, as a tool to guide the individual and thus the group.

Roosevelt believes that the truly subversive person in the American life was the cynic, the pessimist, the man of little faith: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself--nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts."¹³ He told the country that it was unintelligent to be a defeatist in 1940 when the Nazis triumphed over what he was sworn to defend. Indeed, the last words that he wrote: "The only limit to realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with strong and active faith."¹⁴

When Roosevelt talks about fear it is difficult to ascertain whether he is talking about the fear of the individual or panphobic fear. He appears to feel that they are inseparable because he felt that whatever affects the individual affects the group. He saw no separation but

¹²Roosevelt, op. cit., V. X, p. 366

¹³Roosevelt, op. cit., V. II, p. 11

¹⁴Roosevelt, op. cit., XIII, p. 346.

only relationship between the individual and the group.

Learning. Roosevelt's theory of giving knowledge to the common man showed his basic beliefs in the power of the common man to learn. He believed that through thinking and understanding, every man could be made to learn to understand many things.

Roosevelt was the first public figure on the American scene to use the mass media of radio for purposes of education. The public awaited Roosevelt's Fireside Chats with pencils, maps, and atlases in order that they might understand and follow his speeches as he expected them to do. Roosevelt believed that if a person desired to learn he could be taught many things ordinarily considered impossible. Therefore, in learning, he believed motivation to be a very important factor. Roosevelt was an advocate of original thinking as he said in his acceptance speech at the 1932 Chicago Democratic Convention, "I have started out on the tasks that lie ahead by breaking absurd traditions."

Independent thinking was also an important aspect of learning, according to Roosevelt, as he so aptly stated: "...the average citizen is acquiring rapidly the gift of discrimination--and the more all of these subjects are talked about...the more the public will make up its own mind in the long run. The public will acquire the ability to think things through for themselves."¹⁵

¹⁵Roosevelt, op. cit. V. VIII, P. 557.

It would seem that Roosevelt felt learnings could be facilitated by the practice of independent and original thinking. Through the exercise of these faculties understanding would develop.

Roosevelt was not arbitrary in saying that habit formation was of primary importance. However, he advocated the proper training of children so that they might grow up in the correct manner and develop right habits. He believed that understanding and a sharpened awareness developed or resulted from learnings.

On the other hand, in contrast to his idea of habit, Roosevelt advocated the ideas of independent thinking. He believed in innovation and the acceptance of new trends as he stated:

Everyone of the new factors in our lives in the result of experimentation, and it is therefore only logical and not radical to insist that through experimentation also we must solve the social and economic difficulties of the present.¹⁶

This statement indicates that Roosevelt was not bound by hard and fast rules. He had an open mind. To emphasize the importance of the free unshackled mind and of learning he said: "Men are not prisoners of fate, but only prisoners of their own mind."¹⁷

For Roosevelt the practical application of learning and of knowledge was a necessary part of life. "We shall be concerned with ways in which the broad chasm between knowing and doing may be bridged over."¹⁸

¹⁶Roosevelt, op. cit., V. I, p.256.

¹⁷Roosevelt, op. cit., V. VIII, p. 242.

¹⁸Roosevelt, op. cit., V. VIII, p. 243.

Hilgard, a contemporary psychologist, believes that there are two main approaches to the explanation of learning: habit formation and understanding. He regards these as complimentary. Neither is complete in itself as an explanation of learning. Their relationship is illustrated by a crude continuum: at one end, blind mechanical habit formation and on the other end is the highest degree of insightful and rational understanding. Most learning takes place somewhere between the two extremes. The following diagram may illustrate Hilgard's concept.

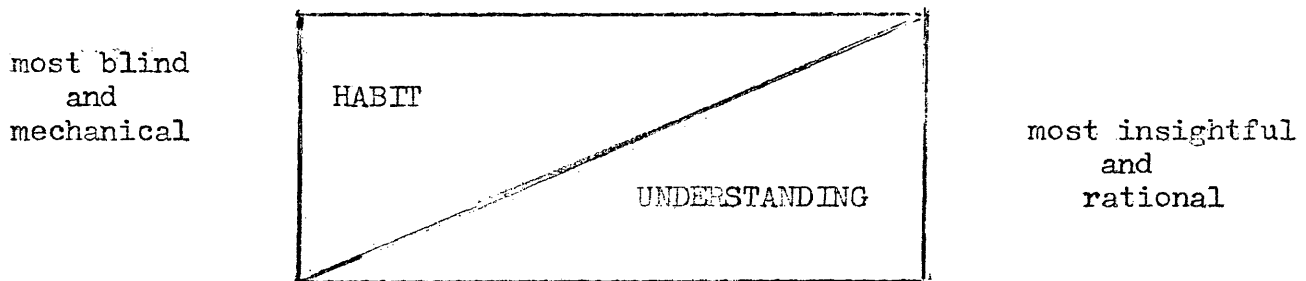


Figure 1

Roosevelt's concepts about learning seem to have many similarities to those of Hilgard. He (Roosevelt) did not draw an arbitrary line between habit formation and understanding and say that this is

where learning has occurred. His whole philosophy of working with the American people seemed to be based on the supposition that proper habit formation would lead to more learning, to better understanding, and in this way to a better life.

Although Roosevelt believed that all Americans should have an equal chance for education he did not think everyone should go to college. The aptitude and purpose of the individual, as well as the needs of the individual, should be considered before college entrance.

He respected the classical learning of his boyhood but it was not sufficient for the modern world. He thought that the eternal ideals of truth and justice must be applied in the terms of the present. "Eternal truths will be neither true nor eternal unless they have fresh meaning for every new social situation."¹⁹

Personality. Roosevelt thought of human personality as something unique and as a composite of many qualities. He felt that an adequate personality could develop only in an atmosphere of freedom: freedom of country, freedom of religion, freedom of ideas, freedom of education, freedom of ideals: As he stated the following:

Human personality is something sacred. It enjoys the light of reason and liberty. It grows up rising above the material things and wedding itself to spiritual ideals. Our social order is worthy of human beings only in so far as it recognizes the inherent value of human personality.²⁰

¹⁹Roosevelt, op. cit., IX, p. 243.

²⁰Roosevelt, op. cit., V, p. 189.

Like Aristotle, Roosevelt thought that for an individual to achieve self-actualization, or realization, meant that he should achieve a life of happiness necessary for good personality development.

To him, personally, it meant that every individual should have a life of health and vigor, good education, decent work and reasonable income, freedom of undertaking under fair rules, the right to vote, to worship, and to behave as the individual wished without infringing on the personal liberties of others.

Roosevelt thought of self discipline and self control as being necessary components in an adequate interpretation of personality. He believed in calling upon a spiritual source to help in self discipline as is humorously illustrated here:

I was just thinking of an old idea of self-discipline, an old Chinese proverb of a Chinese Christian. He prayed every day--he had been told to pray to our kind of God--and his prayer was : "Lord, reform Thy world, beginning with me."²¹

Roosevelt believed that the basic sources of personality development were heredity and environment. We may safely say that Roosevelt believed that our genetic endowment provided the essential basis and sets the limits for both physiological and psychological development, but the ways in which our potentialities are shaped depends upon our physical and social environment.

He felt that this interaction of heredity and environment created the third ingredient--a unique self--the individual personality.

Roosevelt's views on personality seem similar to those of

²¹Roosevelt, op. cit., Vol. X, p. 561.

contemporary psychologists.²²

Nature-Nurture and Abilities. Roosevelt believed that man must have a proper heredity in order to make the most of his environment and by the same token needed a proper environment to make the most of any heredity, no matter how superior.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt believed that each man, regardless of physical dependence or independence, had a right to a life--a good life--a life that enabled the individual to use his abilities.

Roosevelt did not believe that all incapacitations were of physical origin. He thought that in some way:

...we are all crippled children. And we are the more poignant in our disabilities...because we think that we are grown-up and big and strong, and yet are so often unhumorously immature and unequal to the tasks our times impose on us.

Perhaps, because he was physically handicapped himself, he did much personally to alleviate the suffering caused by Infantile Paralysis. He was a living example of what a physically handicapped person could do when given adequate ability and opportunity. He stated, as follows:

I am grateful to America--for reaffirming at this hour America's humanity, America's active concern for its children...

.....

It is because we believe in and insist on, the right of the helpless, the right of the weak, and the right of the crippled everywhere to play their part in life--and service.²⁴

²²Witmer and Kotinsky, Personality in the Making (New York: Harper, 1952) Chapter 1.

²³Roosevelt, op. cit., IX, p. 64.

²⁴Roosevelt, op. cit., III, p. 62.

He once remarked when discussing rehabilitation: "Let us well remember that every child, indeed every person who is restored to useful citizenship is an asset to the country and is enabled to pull his own weight in the boat."²⁵

Roosevelt was aware of the vast differences in intelligence that exist and he desired that every individual should achieve his utmost. In a letter to H. G. Wells, he wrote as follows:

...but I must tell you frankly that you are more good to the world in writing books, when hundreds of thousands of people read and discuss them in catering to the intelligentsia--there are so few of them.²⁶

Roosevelt was vitally interested in improving the environment of all people who desired it. He felt that a free country was necessary to all of our people. To him, a free climate, was a necessary component of an environment that could promote education. "...a true education depends upon freedom in the pursuit of truth...The truth is found when men are free to pursue it."²⁷

Roosevelt labored unceasingly to enable every man to achieve as far as the individual's abilities would permit him to do so. He desired that every person should have his chance. As he applied the principle of education to democracy, he applied the principle of democracy to ed-

²⁵ Roosevelt, op. cit., X, p. 89.

²⁶ Roosevelt, Franklin D., Franklin D. Roosevelt, His Personal Letters, (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1943) I, p. 70.

²⁷ Roosevelt, Franklin D., The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, (New York: Macmillan, 1939) V., p. 321.

ucation. "We cannot afford to overlook any source of human raw material," he asserted. "Genius flowers in most unexpected places; 'it is the impetus of the undistinguished host that hurls forth a Diomed or a Hector'."28

The relationship between nature (heredity) and nurture (environment) in human development has long been a controversial issue among psychologists. One prevalent contemporary view of this problem is that of interaction. Man is a product of both his heredity and his environment. Anatasi explains interaction as the "interdependence of heredity and environment."29 She also said the following:

...any one environmental factor will exert a different influence depending upon the specific hereditary material upon which it operates. Similarly any hereditary factor will operate differently under different environmental conditions.30

Roosevelt appears to have ahead of his time in his concern that each man have the opportunity to use his abilities to the fullest extent and in the idea that abilities and intelligence are not the property of the wealthy class only. Indeed, his efforts seem to have been directed to the task of making it possible for every individual to improve his environment and make the best possible use of his heredity.

²⁸Roosevelt, op. cit., VII, p. 416.

²⁹Anatasi and Foley, Differential Psychology, (New York: Macmillan, 1949) p. 113, 116.

³⁰Ibid.

SUMMARY

1. Roosevelt believed that the satisfaction of physiological needs was of the greatest importance to man.
2. He believed that true individual freedom could not exist without economic security and independence.
3. Roosevelt thought that a structure of spiritual values could only be built by a man upon a foundation of sound economic security.
4. Roosevelt believed that the safety and security need was a fundamental one.
5. He thought that conformity to social norms by the individual aided his feelings of security.
6. Roosevelt desired to help the poor, but was opposed to a system of handouts.
7. He believed intensely in the value of work, self help, and productivity.
8. He firmly believed that every man had a right to life and the right to a comfortable living.

18. Roosevelt viewed emotion as being a vital part of our life.
19. Roosevelt felt that whatever emotion affected the group affected the individual.
20. Roosevelt thought that the common man could understand complex problems if but given the chance to do so.
21. Roosevelt believed that the rules of the past did not provide answers for the future.
22. He believed innovation and experimentation and perhaps a more liberal interpretation of tradition would help the present world problems.
23. To him human personality was a very individualized and sacred thing.
24. Roosevelt thought that an adequate heredity must be nurtured by a good environment.
25. Roosevelt professed that each man had a right to a good life regardless of abilities.
26. He felt that the incapacitated should be given every possible opportunity to help themselves.

27. Roosevelt felt that the incidence of very high intelligence was rare and occurred in unexpected places.
28. A contemporary view of psychology believes that heredity and environment interact.
29. Roosevelt seems to agree with the interaction theory.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

I. SUMMARY OF GENERAL FINDINGS

The conclusions reached under the various topics of this study are summarized at the end of each chapter. The general findings of this thesis are as follows:

Franklin Delano Roosevelt seems to have had a deeply rooted faith in the Democratic way of life--the life that enabled every man, to make the most of his abilities. This philosophy served as the basis of his beliefs. Most of his assumptions about human behavior and human nature may be traced to these ideological convictions.

Roosevelt's philosophical assumptions were in reality positively orientated. History shows us that power politics have always been with us, but Roosevelt believed that this trend could be changed. He felt that the individual, the community, the country, and the world could be taught and could learn the right way of life--The Golden Rule of Life. Social psychologists believe that virtually all social behavior is learned behavior. Roosevelt's beliefs imply that man can be trained or led in almost any direction--particularly the right direction, the good direction

II Conclusions

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this paper is that

Franklin Delano Roosevelt had no systematic psychological basis for his ideas about the behavior of man and that his thinking was extremely dependent upon his ideas of the moment. Roosevelt's pragmatic approach to life intensified his habit of grasping at a situation that existed now for a temporary advantage, hoping that a long time advantage, might develop.

His ideas of personality, habit, perception, learning, fit into no one particular school of thought and he followed along with whatever idea suited his purpose of the moment. He used dualism, monism or dynamism if it fit his plan of the hour. In many cases he used the dualism of religion because it fit into his fabric of thought development.

His idea of the "Four Freedoms" was not based on any psychological concept of freedom but were merely dogmatic announcements that this is what is needed by man. His ideas about the "Four Freedoms" appears to stem from his concern about social needs rather than ideas of tissue needs.

Roosevelt was an eclectic and a pragmatist, who took whatever ideas were convenient to accomplish his objective of the time rather than formulating a system of ideas that might explain his beliefs about the nature of experience, the nature of the human mind, the nature of human personality.

Suggestions for further research. In a discussion about a man of this character, with so many enemies and so many friends it is difficult to keep the halo effect out of any discursion. This is one of

the weaknesses and difficulties of this type of thesis and it is certainly true of this thesis.

I would suggest that further research be done on the psychological assumptions of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and that an effort be made to get an objective view of the man, keeping the idea of right or wrong, good or evil out of the dissertation.

Perhaps in the future new methods of research may be developed. It may become possible through more objective methods of analysis to do word or language investigations that will dissolve many of the problems of semantics that this type of study encounters.

Inasmuch as Roosevelt was raised primarily by his mother and had several women who were devoted to him, it may be of interest to another researcher to attempt to ascertain what their influence was in his life. and his thinking.

The fact that Roosevelt was also very physically handicapped undoubtedly had bearing on his beliefs and attitudes. It would be interesting to contrast his ideas of man and the social order as seen by him both before and after his illness.